



TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE ENERGY, EDUCATION, AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

SB 236 - Election Law - Certification of Election-Supporting Technology - Regulations, Review, and Evaluation

POSITION: Support

BY: Linda Kohn President

Date: February 11, 2026

In 2014 the League of Women Voters did a study of Instant Runoff Voting, also known as Ranked Choice Voting (RCV). This is the position adopted by our members state-wide:

Support the option to use Instant Runoff Voting (IRV):

- 1. for single-seat or executive office elections, both at the state and county and local level. This would require the winner to receive a **majority of the votes cast**.*
- 2. to fill vacancies in any vacancies in any state or county offices, when special elections are held, instead of conducting both special political party primaries and a special general election.*

Support requiring all voting equipment (hardware and software) to accommodate IRV and require all voting equipment (hardware and software) for use in Maryland allow alternative ways of casting and counting ballots and be usable for all county and municipal elections.

SB 236 would direct the State Board of Elections to certify election-supporting technology for ranked choice voting elections. This means of voting is being adopted by and considered by many of our municipalities and hopefully, you will pass enabling legislation to allow our counties to use this method of calculating who wins an election as well.

Ranked choice voting gives every voter the freedom to fully express their support for candidates they like without fear their vote will be wasted or help elect someone they do not like. It results in the winning candidate being the one for whom a majority of voters cast a vote instead of the one who just got the most votes. In races with large numbers of candidates this is particularly important because the results are a much better representation of who the voters actually prefer.

To employ RCV in Maryland, we need the proper technology. Therefore, we urge a favorable vote on SB 236.